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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AGRE-00 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 AF-10 ARA-10
EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 COME-00 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OIC-02
L-03 OES-07 FDRE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 OMB-01
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FODAG

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AORG, FAO, OCON, EAGR
SUBJ: FAO COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (CWFS), THIRD SESSION

1. SUMMARY: THIRD SESSION OF FAO'S CWFS HELD ROME APRIL 24-28, 1978. ALL MAJOR US OBJECTIVES, INCLUDING MORE CRITICAL ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT (IWA) AND FOOD SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME (FSAS), ACHIEVED. COMMITTEE CONCLUDED CEREAL STOCKS CURRENTLY SLIGHTLY ABOVE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR WORLD FOOD SECURITY. WITH EXCEPTION OF REGRETTABLE LAPSE BY FAO DG SAOUMA IN OPENING MEETING, COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS IN BOTH PLENARY AND DRAFTING WERE AMICABLE AND NON-CONTENTIOUS. FROM US PERSPECTIVE, MOST OF FEW HITCHES IN DELIBERATIONS WERE PRODUCED BY EEC RIGIDITY.
END SUMMARY.

2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: THIRD SESSION CWFS HELD ROME APRIL 24-28. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP GREW TO 79 WITH ACCESSION OF 34 NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST MEETING. SIXTY-EIGHT MEMBER NATIONS, SEVEN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, EEC, AND INTERNATIONAL WHEAT COUNCIL PARTICIPATED. B. RAGHAVEN OF INDIA ELECTED CHAIRMAN FOR BIENNIUM.

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3. CONSULTATIONS. CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO COMMITTEE'S OPENING SESSION AMONG US, EEC AND CONSTITUENT NATIONS, JAPAN, AND ARGENTINA PRODUCED CONSENSUS AMONG KEY PRODUCER/DONOR NATIONS ON COMMON OBJECTIVES CONSISTENT WITH US INSTRUCTIONS. US-HOSTED LUNCH APRIL 25 FOR CHAIRMAN RAGHAVEN AND LEADING LDC DELEGATIONS (INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND YUGOSLAVIA) HELPED ESTABLISH FRIENDLY AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP SUSTAINED

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THROUGHOUT MEETING. CHAIRMAN RAGHAVEN, FORMER CONGRESSIONAL FELLOW AND KISSINGER STUDENT, CONSISTENTLY HELPFUL.

4. PLENARY SESSIONS: PLENARY SESSIONS PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY WITH BROAD AGREEMENT BETWEEN DONOR AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. DIFFERENCE IN EMPHASIS WHICH DEVELOPED BETWEEN THESE GROUPS ON ISSUE OF IWA NEGOTIATIONS PROVED MINOR. ON THIS AND OTHER POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT, PLENARY REFRAINED FROM DETAILED DISCUSSIONS IN FAVOR OF DRAFTING COMMITTEE.

5. WORLD FOOD SECURITY: COMMITTEE CONCLUDED WORLD CEREAL STOCKS (EXCLUDING USSR AND PRC) TOTALED OVER 19 PERCENT OF ANNUAL CONSUMPTION, SLIGHTLY ABOVE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT ESTIMATED BY FAO FOR FOOD SECURITY. HOWEVER, ALSO NOTED THERE WAS QUOTE NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY UNQUOTE AS PRECARIOUS FACTORS EXISTED WHICH COULD DRAW DOWN STOCK RESERVES RAPIDLY.

6. SET-ASIDE: VARIOUS LDC DELEGATIONS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT US WOULD IMPLEMENT CEREAL SET-ASIDE POLICY WHILE FOOD SHORTAGES STILL EXISTED IN VARIOUS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. FAO DG SAOUMA HAD BEEN FIRST TO RAISE ISSUE BY REFERRING TO US SET-ASIDE IN OPENING PARAGRAPH OF HIS ADDRESS AND SUGGESTING IT WAS ONE OF KEY PROBLEMS WHICH SHOULD FRAME COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSIONS OF WORLD FOOD SECURITY. US DELEGATION SUCCEEDED IN ALLAYING MOST OF CONCERNS BY EXPLAINING STEP WAS TAKEN WITH FULL AWARENESS OF FOOD SECURITY NEEDS AND BY DETAILING ACCOMPANYING CEREAL RESERVE PROGRAMS.
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COMMENTS IN FINAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENT REFERRED TO BOTH SET-ASIDE AND RESERVES POLICY IN LARGELY FAVORABLE TERMS.

7. INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT: PRODUCER NATIONS, LED BY EEC, AUSTRALIA, AND US, SET TONE OF DISCUSSION BY FORCIBLY ARGUING AT EARLY STAGE THAT DETAILED DEBATE ON IWA COULD PREJUDICE ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS AND WERE OTHERWISE POINTLESS AS DELEGATIONS WERE NOT EMPOWERED TO NEGOTIATE IN THIS FORUM. WHILE AGREEING WITH NEED TO AVOID PREJUDICING NEGOTIATIONS, LDC REPS INITIALLY CLAIMED THAT ENOUGH LATITUDE EXISTED BETWEEN OVERLY DETAILED POSITIONS AND GENERALITIES TO ALLOW FOR CONSTRUCTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON IWA PROVISIONS. IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, THESE FINE DISTINCTIONS WERE NOT SUSTAINABLE AND COMMITTEE ENDED BY LARGELY REITERATING THOSE ELEMENTS OF CONSENSUS PRODUCED AT FEBRUARY/MARCH NEGOTIATIONS. SOME HIGHLIGHTS:
-- EMERGENCY AID: DESPITE SECRETARIAT AND LDC BACKING, ENDORSE- WAS NOT OBTAINED FOR US PROPOSAL FOR A QUOTE SPECIAL PROVISION FOR EMERGENCY NEEDS END QUOTE IN FOOD AID CONVENTION BECAUSE OF STRONG EEC OPPOSITION. FINAL LANGUAGE WAS COUCHED IN THE QUOTE SOME NATIONS, ETC. END QUOTE FORMULATION.
-- WFP: RECOMMENDATIONS THAT DONORS CHANNEL MORE OF FOOD AID THROUGH WORLD FOOD PROGRAM WERE SUCCESSFULLY PARRIED. FINAL

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LANGUAGE URGED ONLY QUOTE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION. END QUOTE.

FAC VS. WTC: ALTHOUGH LDC'S URGED SEPARATE CONSIDERATION OF FAC IF DIFFERENCES IN WTC PERSIST, NO RECOMMENDATION ON THIS ISSUE WAS PASSED.
(COMMENT: IF LDC'S AT MEXICO SESSION TRY TO FOCUS ON GENEVA GRAIN NEGOTIATIONS IN DISRUPTIVE MANNER, HANDLING OF THIS ISSUE AT THIS MEETING PROVIDES BASIS CHANNELING DISCUSSION.)

8. FSAS: PRINCIPLE OF BILATERAL ASSISTANCE IN AREAS OF COMPETENCE OF FOOD SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME WAS PRESERVED DESPITE CONSIDERABLE LDC ENTHUSIASM FOR INCREASED USE OF MULTILATERAL CHANNEL FOR SUCH ASSISTANCE. IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS USE FSAS TO COORDINATE
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AND EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL AID TO FOOD SECURITY.

9. SAOUMA: FAO DG SAOUMA MADE SEVERAL MAINLY UNFORTUNATE PUBLIC INTERVENTIONS: I.E., HIS OPENING SPEECH, A REBUKE OF TWO SECRETARIAT MEMBERS WHO WERE CONSULTING WHILE HE SPOKE, AND AN OF-THE-WALL CHARGE THAT CANADA WAS QUOTE SABOTAGING END QUOTE THE MEETING. THIS LAST ACCUSATION, MADE IN RESPONSE TO A SIMPLE REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION, WAS PUZZLING, RESENTED BY MANY DELEGATIONS, AND CONSTITUTED ONLY INCIDENT TO MAR WEEK'S PROCEEDINGS.

10. COMMENT: THE ATMOSPHERE AT THIS MEETING WAS BETTER THAN AT MOST MEETINGS OF THIS TYPE. THOUGH THERE WERE STATEMENTS MADE THAT WERE REALLY FOR THE RECORD, FOR MOST PART TONE WAS BUSINESS-LIKE ON ALL SIDES--DC'S, LDC'S, AND SECRETARIAT. ALL EXPRESSED AND SHOWED DESIRE NOT TO DISRUPT GRAIN NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA.
GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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